



## Lubbock area schools' career training programs get boost at Workforce Solutions event

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Workforce Solutions South Plains celebrated a ribbon cutting at its new location in West Lubbock Wednesday morning with a check presentation benefiting eight local school districts' career training programs.

A total of \$180,670 will help more than 700 secondary-level students in Crosbyton, Frenship, Levelland, Lubbock, Lubbock Cooper, Plainview, Roosevelt and Shallowater school districts. The funds were earned through a \$90,336 high demand job training grant from the Texas Workforce Commission, matched by the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, with help from Levelland and Plainview's economic development corporations.

The school districts will use the funds for training, equipment, supplies and payments for certification exams, reads a news release from Workforce Solutions. The school districts offer various occupational training programs and classes, with something for almost every student's interest, like welding, nursing, culinary arts and automotive maintenance, among others.

Andres Alcantar, TWC chairman, said programs that teach students skills in high demand improve Texas' already strong economy. The state was ranked as number one for business by CNBC this week. Unemployment rates were also at notable lows, down to 2.8 percent in Lubbock in May, per the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"It's important that when we consider that we're all in this together, we need to make sure that we have prosperous communities in our prosperous state," Alcantar said. "We need to make sure that we inspire students, create curriculum and give them an opportunity to go out there and get some applied learning."

Christine Allen, director of workforce development at LEDA, said supporting these grants is a group effort that benefits all of West Texas in a time when skilled labor is in high demand.

“All of us together are training our future workforce, and we’re going to ensure that we have a highly skilled workforce that helps our growing community,” said Allen.

One of the many students who will benefit from the funding is Christian Vela, a junior at Lubbock High School who is involved in the computer maintenance and telecommunications programs offered through the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center in the Lubbock Independent School District. He said the grant will help him learn more skills he will some day use in his career.

“What this does is give us skill sets that prepare us for the workforce, for professional development,” Vela said. “For me personally, I love computers and computer maintenance. When I get hands-on experience, it’s great to have my passion right in front of me.”

The check presentation was part of the ribbon cutting ceremony for Workforce Solutions’ new facility at 2002 W. Loop 289, Suite 117. Offices moved to Wayland Plaza at the beginning of the month because they needed more space. Their former office in downtown Lubbock will be a part of the Citizens Tower city hall campus.